

## NPS Common Learning Portal (CLP) SUCCESS STORY

### Developing the Park Service Workforce through CLP Trainings and Resources



Theresa Schaffner  
Career Seasonal Biological Technician for  
the Northern Great Plains Inventory and  
Monitoring Network

Theresa Schaffner works with the NPS Botany Vegetation Monitoring crew where she travels to 11 parks in midwestern states between May-October to collect data and monitor how the plant community, vegetation, and forest structure change over time. After collecting the data, Theresa works in the office during the winter months to analyze data collected, manage data entry and data quality control, and write reports. She summarizes and shares her findings with parks so they can use the data in their natural resource management programs.

## Challenge

Because Theresa's team travels so often for work, the budget is usually only allocated for travel and lodging at park sites - funds for training can be limited. Theresa shares that she and her colleagues are all ambitious and want to learn as much as possible about their career field; however, oftentimes either trainings do not exist in her field or her team does not have access or the budget to attend physical trainings.

## Solution

The CLP brings personalized, professional development to Theresa and her colleagues. The CLP offers relevant physical and online trainings, and supplemental resources in all NPS career fields. With access to these assets, the NPS workforce can invest in themselves, actively cultivating their skills and developing themselves professionally. The CLP also provides free, readily available trainings broken into small, digestible chunks, making access to training affordable and efficient.

Knowledge resources on the CLP allow Theresa to learn more about her field of study, without being dependent upon a training budget. During Theresa's office season, she uses resources to supplement her data analysis and report writing. Resources will often provide helpful vocabulary and syntax she can use to explain the importance of her field to the outside world. If there's ever a time when she is struggling to write a summary in an eloquent way, she'll use the CLP to obtain instructions, ideas, and refresh her memory on information she's previously learned.

The CLP also allows Theresa to acquire skills on programs she's personally interested in outside of her field, such as other programs in Natural Resources. She uses CLP knowledge resources to train herself as much as she can to show her supervisors that she's invested to acquire additional training funds to pursue learning opportunities in those topics.

## Outcome

Theresa encourages her peers and colleagues to utilize resources on the CLP to help them succeed in their roles. The CLP serves as a good transition and onboarding tool to explain park service roles to new employees, interns, and volunteers. Theresa stresses that the CLP is a great asset in hiring new people to the crew; new hires can access an inventory of classes and resources that enable them to better understand their new role.

In addition to providing onboarding information, the CLP can also connect new hires with mentors and subject matter experts across the Park Service.

“[The CLP] is comprehensive, easy to use, and a great way for individuals to be trained within their own personal constraints. I think [the CLP] is really key in bringing the park service together and developing the workforce.”

